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ABSTRACT

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal program aimed at equalizing access to higher education for low-income students. GEAR UP, created in 1998, attempts to provide information and support to students beginning no later than seventh grade while promoting lasting partnerships among school districts, colleges, and other entities to operate GEAR Up projects. A national evaluation of GEAR UP was conducted after the first 2 years. This report describes the program and sets the stage for subsequent evaluation of program impact. The report suggests hypotheses and issues about GEAR UP practices and outcomes that can be pursued in a longitudinal study following GEAR UP participants who entered in seventh grade in 2000-2001. Background information has been collected from 18 schools, and descriptive information has been collected through site visits to 20 partnerships of the 237 operating in the second year of operation. Preliminary findings show that on average, GEAR UP partnerships received federal grants of about $660 per student served. Tutoring was the most common service offered across sites in the first 2 years, and college-planning activities offered at almost all projects. Summer programs were generally not as well attended as expected, and many GEAR UP partnerships were scaling back summer program activities. (Contains 2 figures and 20 endnotes.) (SLD)

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National Evaluation of GEAR UP

A Summary of the First Two Years

2003

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National Evaluation of GEAR UP

A Summary of the First Two Years

U.S. Department of Education
Office of the Under Secretary
Policy and Program Studies Service

Westat
Rockville, Md.

2003

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Contents

Executive Summary 1

The Federal Grants 1

This Report 2

What We Have Learned 3

Part One: Partnership Grants 5

The Students in GEAR UP and Their Parents 5

Services Students Receive 7

Supplemental Academic Support 7

Guiding Students to College 9

Intensity of Supplemental Services 11

Services Parents Receive 13

Support Schools Receive 14

Administering GEAR UP Partnerships 16

GEAR UP and the School Environment 18

Part Two: State GEAR UP Projects 19

Grants Where All or Most Services Are Administered by State Agencies 19

Grants Where All or Most Services Are Conducted through Subgrants to Schools or Districts 19

Endnotes 21

List of Figures

Figure 1. Racial and ethnic composition of GEAR UP students 5

Figure 2. Comparison of GEAR UP and national participation rates in special programs 6

Executive Summary

Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) is a federal program aimed at equalizing access to higher education for low-income students. GEAR UP was created in 1998 as part of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act of 1965. As mandated by the legislation, GEAR UP grantees seek to increase postsecondary access and completion by promoting the following:

- Information to students and parents (e.g., appropriate information on college preparatory courses, cost of college attendance, financial assistance and different programs of study).
- Individualized academic and social support to students.
- Parent involvement in education.
- Educational excellence.
- School reform.
- Student participation in rigorous courses.

To further these objectives, GEAR UP grantees are charged with establishing strong and lasting partnerships among school districts, colleges and other entities to operate the projects.

In this report we look at the students being served by GEAR UP, the activities and services provided to these students and their parents, additional professional development opportunities for teachers and curriculum development efforts taking place in these schools. We summarize the growth and changes that occurred at the study sites during the first two years of their grants.

The Federal Grants

GEAR UP entered its third year of operation in fall 2001. The first grants were awarded in August 1999 to two types of recipients: (1) partnerships of school districts, colleges and other organizations (164 awards) and (2) state agencies (21 awards). In its first year, the program awarded $75 million in federal resources to partnership grantees and $42 million to state grantees. Additional grantees were added in 2000 and 2001. There are now 243 partnership grantees and 30 state grantees. A total of about $295 million was awarded in fiscal year (FY) 2001 to all GEAR UP grantees. Two-thirds of the federal funds were awarded to partnership grantees and the remaining one-third to state grantees.

Partnership grants require recipients to begin providing services to students no later than seventh grade and to continue services to these students in participating high schools until graduation. This requirement means that, in most school districts in the program, middle schools have been the first schools to participate in GEAR UP. In all participating schools, at least 50 percent of the students must be low-income (i.e., eligible for free or reduced-price lunches). Unlike other federal programs designed to increase college access that enroll students who meet specified criteria, GEAR UP partnership grantees must provide assistance to **all** students in designated grade levels in participating schools (called cohorts).

The whole grade (or grade cohort) approach recognizes that in schools with high rates of family poverty, all students are at greater risk of poor academic performance and low rates of college attendance.[1] The GEAR UP approach of serving all students also allows services to be integrated into the school day and regular educational offerings, providing greater opportunities for academic assistance and education reform.

The federal resources provided through GEAR UP are relatively modest given the program's ambitious goals. In the first year of the program, the 164 partnerships served more than 100,000 students with an average per student expenditure of about $650 from federal resources. The maximum allowable federal allocation per student is $800. To extend the available resources, grantees are required to support at least 50 percent of the cost of operating their projects through cash and in-kind contributions. The remainder of this report will report on the federal share. In their second year, the same 164 grantees served just over 150,000 students, with an average per student expenditure of about $630. The 73 new partnership grantees added in 2000 served about 45,000 students at an average of approximately $760 per student.[2] These resources were used not only to provide student services but also to provide information and services to parents and to implement reforms (such as curriculum development, teacher professional development and other school reform efforts).

State grantees operate under somewhat different rules from partnerships. A wide range of state agencies may administer state grants alone or in conjunction with other entities. State GEAR UP grants must offer both a college awareness and preparation component as well as college scholarships; at least 50 percent of the grant must be used for scholarships. Projects may provide services to cohorts of students (like partnerships), or they may focus on disadvantaged "priority students" in any grade.[3] They may also obtain waivers on the use of funds for scholarships until current GEAR UP participants reach college age.

The average per student funding amount for state grants is lower than that reported by partnerships. In the second year of their grants, 21 1999-funded state grantees served more than 135,000 students at an average cost of about $370 in federal funds per student. State grantees receiving their first-year award in 2000 served about 29,000 students for less than $400 per student.

This Report

The legislation establishing GEAR UP mandated an evaluation of the program. This report is an early product of that evaluation. The report describes the program, as implemented, and sets the stage for later examination of GEAR UP's impact on high school performance and college participation. The report suggests hypotheses and issues about GEAR UP practices and student outcomes that can be pursued in the longitudinal study described below. We also identify implementation issues that have arisen as the program has developed that may warrant attention from program officials. Information on partnership and state grantees is reported separately.

The study design. The evaluation is following a group of GEAR UP participants who entered the program in seventh grade during the 2000-01 school year. (We refer to this component of the evaluation as the "longitudinal study.") The students were selected from partnership projects that began operation in the first year of GEAR UP (1999-2000) and indicated in late 1999 that they were "fairly well along" in implementation and that they planned to serve a new cohort of seventh-graders the following year. Approximately one-third of the first year partnership grantees were excluded because they planned to serve only one cohort over the life of their grants. From among the two-thirds planning to pickup a new cohort of seventh-graders in fall 2000, Westat selected 20 partnership grantees for the evaluation. Because the focus of this evaluation is on the effect of various approaches on student outcomes, Westat made every effort to include projects with applications that reflected different programmatic approaches and a mix of fiscal agents (i.e., school districts, colleges and universities).[4] We then simultaneously matched one middle school participating in each GEAR UP project with a middle school in the same or nearby school district with similar students but without GEAR UP for comparison purposes.

Because the students who are being followed in the national evaluation are still enrolled in middle school, student outcomes such as enrollment in college preparatory courses, high school completion and college attendance will not be known for several more years. Nonetheless, some information is available now about the first two years of GEAR UP from all GEAR UP projects and from the projects and schools participating in the evaluation. This information forms the basis for the current report and includes the following:

- **Background information** on participating students and their parents. Westat collected data from 18 schools through student and parent surveys as well as records of students' and parents' GEAR UP participation.

- **Descriptive information from site visits** to the 20 partnerships conducted during each of the first two years of GEAR UP that explored the nature and status of GEAR UP.[5] During those visits, Westat asked project, district, and school personnel about the design and approach of the GEAR UP project, the partnerships, program administration, the activities that had been undertaken or were planned, the project staffing, and role of the project in reform at the school. Site visitors asked project directors what activities were underway to enable comparable efforts to continue after the end of the grant. Site visitors also conducted group interviews with students, parents, and teachers. Staff made similar visits to seven state grantees as well.

- **Information from the 2001 GEAR UP Annual Performance Reports (APRs).** The APR provides aggregate data on all GEAR UP projects. All GEAR UP grantees submitted their first APR designed specifically for the program in May 2001.[6]

What We Have Learned

Student Characteristics: In the second year of operation (2000-01), there were 237 GEAR UP partnerships serving nearly 200,000 students, 90 percent of whom were in the seventh or eighth grade. GEAR UP students were predominately minority—36 percent were Hispanic, 30 percent African American, 26 percent were white, 5 percent Native American and Hawaiian and 3 percent Asian.

School Characteristics and Climate: As required by law, all schools participating in GEAR UP had free or reduced-price lunch eligibility rates of 50 percent or higher, with a median rate of 67 percent. Several of the 20 middle schools visited as part of the study were facing serious education problems—poor academic performance, high staff turnover and low morale. Initially, this led to resistance to GEAR UP in those schools because it was thought by some that the program might dilute their school's focus on improving academics and test scores. However, by the second site visit in spring 2001, school staff perceptions of GEAR UP had improved markedly, with GEAR UP being seen as a positive force for academic improvement.

Administering GEAR UP Partnerships: On average between 1999-2000 and 2000-01, GEAR UP partnerships received federal grants of $713,000 or about $660 per student. Most of the federal funds are used for staffing. A typical project has a full-time director and possibly one other full-time staff member who are centrally located. In addition, these projects generally have full-time site coordinators and some part-time assistants at each participating middle school. Many projects had planned on having fairly elaborate decision-making processes and involving numerous community partners. In reality, GEAR UP partners rely heavily on project staff (e.g., project directors and coordinators) to plan and carry out project

operations. Most of the partners have been education providers. Two other areas where grantees' original designs have been difficult to implement are involvement of parents and volunteers. The sites visited as part of the evaluation study indicated they had a great deal of difficulty in getting parents involved in GEAR UP activities. A few sites reported success with institutes that enrolled parents in 9- to 10-week workshops or with extensive outreach efforts, individual meetings and home visits. Sites also had trouble recruiting volunteers in the numbers they originally intended and ended up making more use of paid professional staff to provide services.

GEAR UP Services: Projects can be grouped in two major categories based on the services they provide. Some projects focus on instructional or other efforts that affect the regular operation of the school; others focus on the provision of supplemental services to students. One of the sites visited is engaged in a major curriculum reform effort with a few others having components that augment regular instruction. Most of the other projects focused on providing a variety of supplemental services to students:

- **Tutoring** was the most common service offered across sites during years one and two. For budgetary reasons, many projects planned on using volunteers to provide much of the tutoring but, as discussed above, ended up relying much more heavily on paid professional staff, often teachers at the school, to provide tutoring services. It could be argued that this was actually a fortunate occurrence because studies have indicated that effective tutoring requires high dosages, experienced tutors and curriculum alignment all of which are more likely to occur with paid staff as opposed to volunteers working sporadically. Projects significantly reduced planned **mentoring** activities, on the other hand, due to the lack of volunteers. Projects also had difficulty attracting students to tutoring during out-of-school hours due to transportation difficulties and competing interests.

- **College-planning activities**—college fairs, visits to colleges, etc.—occurred at almost all projects and tended to be well-received by students. Projects also held a number of voluntary **special events** to help broaden the horizons of students. Besides providing general college and career information to students, one-third of the sites visited also provided **individual guidance** to all students or all students having academic or behavioral difficulties.

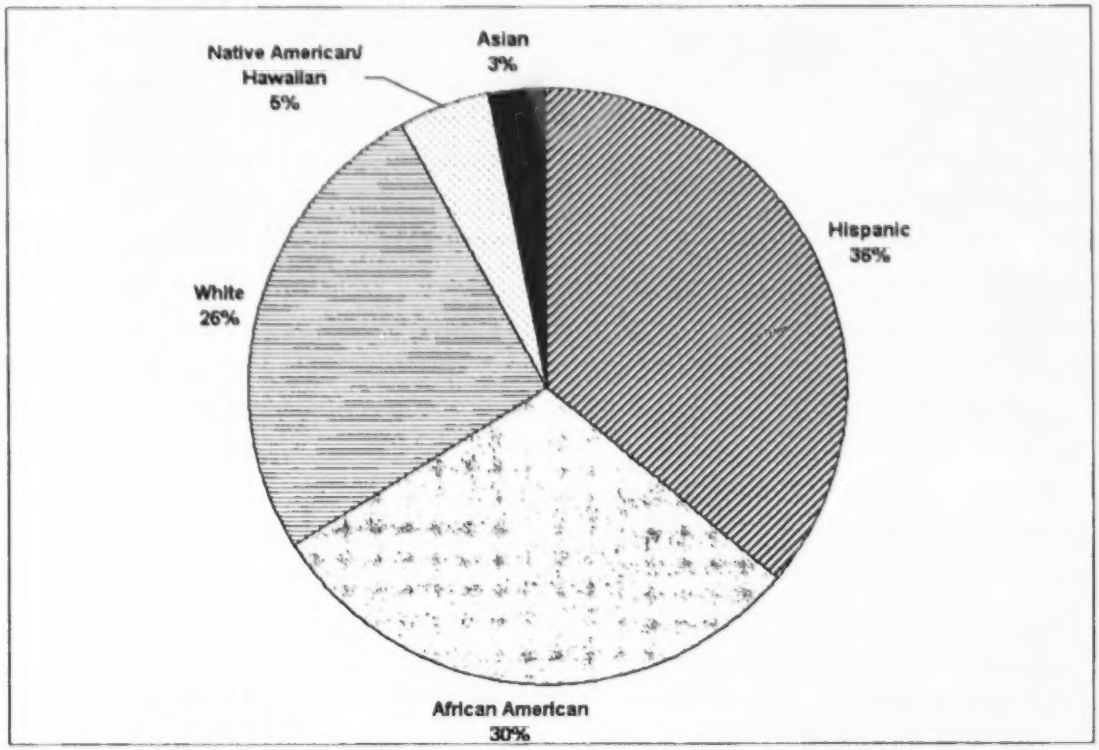
- Ambitious **summer programs** were offered by many projects at the end of their first year but it proved difficult to attract students in the expected numbers. Some projects scaled back their summer plans in the second year (summer 2001) in terms of length and expected number of participants.

- **Professional development** activities increased significantly between years one and two as teachers became more accepting of GEAR UP. Focus groups indicated that teachers were generally satisfied with the professional development opportunities that GEAR UP provided.

State Projects: Four of the seven states visited as part of the study administered GEAR UP services directly from the state agency where the grant was housed. The remaining three states awarded subgrants to schools or districts in the states to operate GEAR UP projects.

The Students in GEAR UP and Their Parents

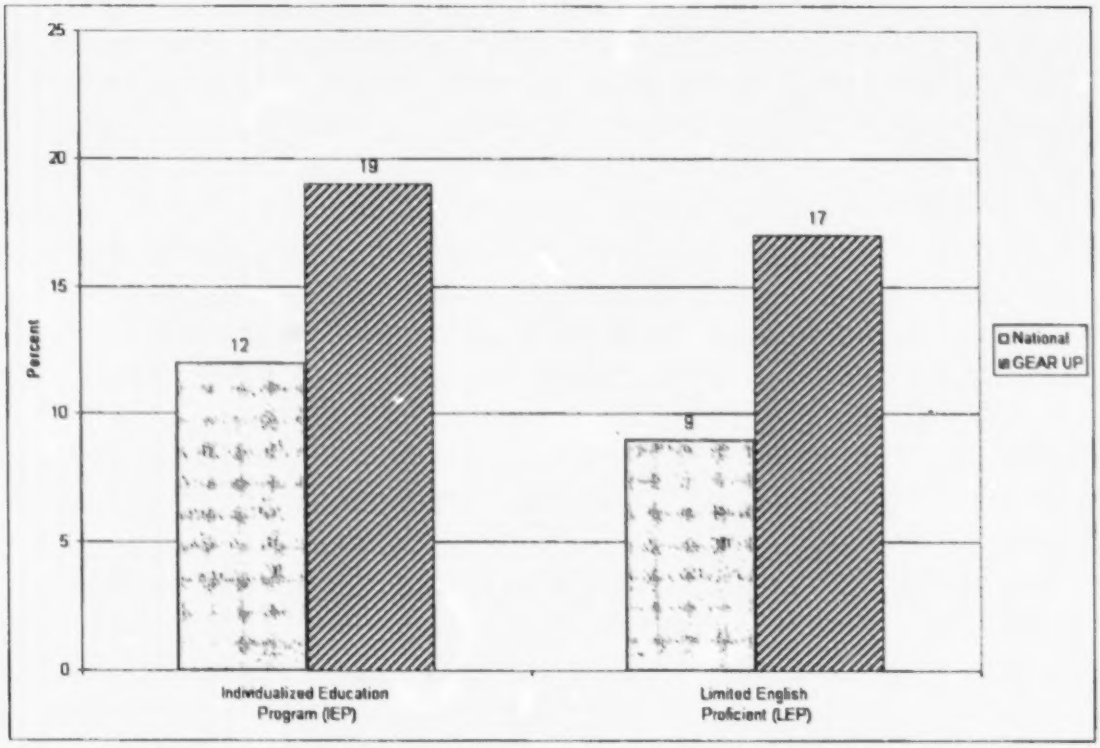
A profile of participants. Each GEAR UP partnership is composed of one or more colleges or universities, one or more school districts, and at least two other organizations, agencies or businesses. According to the APRs submitted by all grantees, in the second year of GEAR UP (2000-01), 237 GEAR UP partnerships were serving almost 200,000 students, with nearly 90 percent of the students enrolled in seventh or eighth grades. These students were evenly divided by gender and were predominately members of minority groups. Hispanics were the largest group served (36 percent), followed by African American students (30 percent) and white students (26 percent). Native Americans and Hawaiians were approximately 5 percent of the participants, and Asians represented 3 percent. (See Figure 1.) Nineteen percent of the students in participating schools had Individualized Education Plans compared with a national estimate of 13 percent across all grades reported in 1998-99.[7] Seventeen percent of the GEAR UP students were classified as limited English proficient (LEP) compared to 9 percent of students nationally, in all grades, in 1999-2000.[8] (See Figure 2.)



Source: 2000-01 Annual Performance Reports

Figure 1. Racial and ethnic composition of GEAR UP students.

The schools and students in the longitudinal study.[9] GEAR UP is aimed at increasing college attendance among low-income students. To ensure that the program reaches the intended beneficiaries, GEAR UP requires that 50 percent or more of the students at participating schools qualify for free or reduced-price lunches under the National School Lunch Program. In fact, many of the schools in GEAR UP have free or reduced-price lunch eligibility rates well in excess of 50 percent. The students in the national evaluation attend schools where the rates at which students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches start at 50 percent and rise to 95 percent, with an average rate of 66 percent. Nationally, 39 percent of students in 1999-2000 were eligible for free or reduced-price lunches.[10]



Sources: National Evaluation of GEAR UP student record data; National Center for Education Statistics; and National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs.

Figure 2. Comparison of GEAR UP and national participation rates in special programs.

Schools that draw from communities with high rates of poverty often have high mobility rates as well. While some of the schools in the evaluation indicate relatively stable student populations, especially schools in rural areas, other schools report annual student turnover rates of 50 percent or greater. It may be the case that many students who start the seventh grade in a GEAR UP participating school do not finish seventh grade, or start the eighth grade, in the same school.

Student attitudes early in seventh grade. As they begin the seventh grade, many students in the GEAR UP schools and the matched comparison schools participating in the national evaluation of GEAR UP have similar plans regarding attending college. In a survey conducted by Westat prior to GEAR UP students receiving services, students indicated that attending college is "very important" to them (84 percent of the GEAR UP students versus 83 percent in the comparison group). However, fewer students in GEAR UP schools, compared to those in the comparison schools, indicated that they "will definitely go to college" (51 percent, GEAR UP; 56 percent, comparison). In addition, fewer students in both GEAR UP and comparison schools expect to enter college or a vocational school immediately after high school (44 percent, GEAR UP; 47 percent, comparison). College costs are seen as the main reason for not continuing with education among this low-income population, as cited by 42 percent of students at GEAR UP schools and 41 percent of students at comparison schools. Nonetheless, one-half of students in both schools expect to complete a college degree, and one-quarter anticipate a graduate or professional degree after high school.

Parents of the study participants. More than one-half (58 percent, GEAR UP; 55 percent, comparison) of the students in this study come from families with household incomes below $30,000.[11] However, despite their relatively low incomes and lack of college experience, the parents of students entering seventh grade have high hopes for their children's education. The survey of parents of seventh-grade students in the national evaluation of GEAR UP study found that most (87 percent, GEAR UP; 83 percent, comparison) think their children will get some postsecondary education, and 76 percent (74 percent, GEAR UP; 78 percent, comparison) think their children will earn at least a bachelor's degree.

The majority of parents did not attend college themselves. Fifty-four percent of parents of students at GEAR UP schools and 51 percent of parents of students at comparison schools of parents did not receive any postsecondary education. Only 9 percent parents of students at GEAR UP schools and 12 percent of parents of students at comparison schools completed a bachelor's degree or higher.

Services Students Receive

The visits to the projects in the national evaluation provided descriptive information on the full range of activities and services undertaken as part of GEAR UP. In each of the projects, the site visitors documented what was occurring as part of GEAR UP—describing the student and parent services, teacher professional development opportunities, curriculum development, other school reforms efforts and any other activities. This section of the report summarizes what we learned from the site visits about GEAR UP services and other activities in the sample of 20 schools.

Supplemental Academic Support

Academic support in the form of **tutoring** is the most common service in GEAR UP. Tutoring can take place both during the regular school day and during nonschool hours. It ranges from one-on-one or small group assistance to computer-assisted instruction (CAI) labs that offer students an opportunity to practice skills. Sometimes academic support is combined with other activities aimed at engaging students in learning and in promoting college, such as sports and clubs. The most common academic support during out-of-school hours is after-school tutoring. Several of the sampled projects offer Saturday academies that include tutoring and a few offer tutoring in the morning before the school day begins. Unfortunately, when tutoring and other services are provided outside of school hours, projects have difficulty attracting students. In focus group interviews, students say that their reasons for not attending activities include transportation problems and competition from other activities. Students also say that they are just too tired

after school. One or two projects in the evaluation require out-of-school tutoring prior to standardized testing for students at risk of poor performance.

Academic support during school hours may focus on a specific course or on preparation for standardized tests more often than out-of-school support. A teacher may use a tutor in the classroom to work with individuals or small groups of students who need more assistance with a lesson. Whole classes or individual students needing additional help may use a GEAR UP-supported computer lab where they practice new skills. A few projects offer tutoring during lunch or study hall periods, when students can receive more individualized attention with homework or classwork. Only a couple of projects indicate that students are taken out of classes for tutoring, and none of the projects indicate "pullout" from a core course. When pullouts do occur, students are excused from physical education or elective classes.

Across the projects in this evaluation, most academic support is provided to students who are having academic problems or who have performed poorly on standardized tests. Most projects do not have the staff needed to provide tutoring to all participants, although at least one project has tried to offer enrichment services to students who do not need tutoring. Teacher recommendations play a major role in deciding who receives academic support, both during school hours and out-of-school.

In their original designs, many of the projects had planned to provide one-on-one tutoring to most or all students, much of it to be provided by college students or other volunteers from partner organizations or the community. The projects experienced considerable difficulty in finding these volunteers for a variety of reasons—

- College schedules and middle school schedules conflict.
- College students do not have transportation to schools or cannot commit to sufficient volunteer hours.
- Many other programs compete for the same college and community volunteers.
- School districts have rules that constrain when tutoring may take place (e.g., limiting volunteer tutoring to school hours but not allowing pullouts from classes) or slow the process of recruitment (e.g., increasingly rigorous background checks).

As a result, many projects are turning to paid tutors. Projects are hiring regular teachers to work before or after school or on Saturdays, using project staff as tutors, paying a limited number of college students who then work part-time (e.g., through college work-study) and using high-performing high school students who are paid a stipend.

The move away from volunteers to paid tutors may have unplanned benefits. If studies are correct, volunteer tutors of the type originally envisioned may not have had much effect on student performance.[12] Studies of the determinants of effective tutoring state that three conditions must be present: training of tutors by experts, high "dosages" of tutoring and tutoring that follows class lesson plans. College students who commit to a small number of hours of GEAR UP tutoring during study halls, lunch periods or after school rarely receive expert training, have little contact with teachers or lessons and are unlikely to provide intensive assistance. Paid tutors, on the other hand, often meet the conditions identified for effective tutoring. Under GEAR UP, the training received by college and high school students who provide tutoring ranges from a single two-hour session to a college course that provides certification, but much of the training is limited to a few hours. A few projects use student teachers as tutors. The longitudinal evaluation of GEAR UP will provide an opportunity to look at the relative effectiveness of different providers of academic support, including teachers, GEAR UP staff (many of whom have

backgrounds in teaching, counseling or other helping professions), college students and high school students. The evaluation will also consider the effects of different environments (e.g., classrooms, Saturday academies and computer labs) and different approaches (e.g., small groups in classrooms, one-on-one homework help and CAI for standardized testing).

Guiding Students to College

The projects in the longitudinal study provide a variety of support services aimed at encouraging students to plan for college. Depending on the project, these services include career and college fairs at schools and colleges, mentoring, college visits, career and school guidance and special events. **Career and college fairs** take place in almost all projects. They occur most often at the middle schools and involve posters and information tables; visits and presentations from college officials, college students and business representatives (some of whom are project partners); special games; and other college-related activities. They may occur on a single day or may involve activities spread over a week or a month. Sometimes, GEAR UP operates these fairs independently, but more commonly they are jointly sponsored by GEAR UP and other programs (like School-to-Work). Fairs are generally schoolwide (or gradewide) events and, in that sense, are capable of affecting all the students in the GEAR UP cohorts (or grades) within a school.

All of the projects in the longitudinal study held at least one **college visit** in the 2000-01 school year, and some organized multiple visits that year. Students who participated in the focus groups report that they enjoy the college visits a great deal and that they are considering college more seriously as a result of the visits. Several project staffs indicated that GEAR UP is responsible for starting college visits for seventh-grade students; before GEAR UP, such visits were not held or only eighth-graders were likely to visit colleges. In the first year of GEAR UP, when implementation was not complete in many projects, it was typical for all students in a grade to go on a single college visit, usually to a partner college for a half or a full school day. In the second year, there was more diversity in visits. In some projects, all students went on one visit, but selected, smaller groups of students went on additional college visits. Typically, these students are selected on a first-come, first-served basis, but sometimes participation is based on recommendations from teachers or others. We will have specific information about student participation in these activities and will know more about their effects on student behavior and attitudes in upcoming reports.

About one-third of the sampled projects operate either an **after-school or a Saturday program** that combines tutoring or other academic assistance with career exploration, interest clubs or recreational activities. These programs are most commonly called clubs, after-school academies, or Saturday academies. After-school programs are typically held several times a week, and Saturday programs are held from once a month to every Saturday. Most are staffed by GEAR UP staff, paid teachers or social service professionals, although one is staffed by paid college students. Some of the programs are extensions of offerings available prior to GEAR UP (under 21st-Century Schools, Title I or other auspices). Typically, these programs are voluntary and sites reported generally low participation on a regular basis.

As with tutoring, most of the GEAR UP projects in the longitudinal study planned to provide volunteer one-on-one **mentoring** to all participants, and, as with tutoring, the inability to find volunteers has led to reconsideration of that plan. Some projects have largely given up on providing one-on-one mentoring to students, or they provide mentors to only a small percentage of students who request them or are referred

by teachers or others. Other projects have redefined mentoring to mean periodic meetings of a college student or adult volunteer with a group of middle school students. Some project directors contend that tutoring has the effect of mentoring as well. One project is using teachers as mentors, with each teacher meeting with at least two students. This appears to be the only project in the study providing mentoring to a relatively large number of GEAR UP participants, but still, fewer than one-half of the students in the cohort are participating. If mentoring is defined as a caring, long-term (a year or more), one-on-one relationship between a student and an adult, it is not clear at this point that any of the projects in the longitudinal study offers, or will be able to offer, this service to more than a handful of students. If the sample size is large enough, the longitudinal study will offer an opportunity to observe whether the small percentage of participants who receive long-term mentoring show different outcomes from comparable students who do not receive this service.

All GEAR UP projects in the longitudinal study provide college and career information to students, but almost one-third of the projects in the longitudinal study provide systematic **individual student guidance** to some or all students. In these projects, counseling is a major focus of service, with individual plans developed for all students or for all students having academic or behavioral difficulties. These plans are called student or career action plans, individual development plans or individual portfolios. In most of the projects that provide this service, students meet individually with GEAR UP counselors to develop the plans and may attend subsequent individual or small group sessions at least once a year. In one program, teachers receive special training and serve as facilitators in individual guidance meetings with students and parents. Projects reported that student plans are likely to include a list of the courses the student will need to prepare for college, the results of career interest discussions or inventories, course grades, scores on standardized tests and other data. In these projects, the GEAR UP counseling sessions may be the only one-on-one counseling the students receive, as most of the schools report that regular counselors do not have time for this level of one-on-one assistance, especially for seventh-graders.

Special events. In addition to college trips and career fairs, many of the GEAR UP projects hold a variety of special events that are seen as opportunities to expand the horizons of program participants. Staff members of the projects and teachers speak about the limited experience most of the students have had, indicating that many have never traveled outside their neighborhoods or communities. Special events take the form of trips to performances, museums and places of employment to name a few. These special event trips are always voluntary. Only relatively small percentages of students in grade cohorts are likely to participate in any single event. A few projects have taken small numbers of students on trips to distant cities (including the nation's capital). These exceptional trips are usually a reward for special activity or behavior (e.g., participating in an essay contest). In one project, two eighth-grade students were selected to travel to Japan during the summer as part of a cultural exchange program. Projects appear to vary substantially in the numbers of special events they provide.

Summer programs. Academic assistance and college preparation are merged in many of the GEAR UP summer offerings. In their first year, the GEAR UP partnership projects had plans for ambitious summer offerings. Projects that had only begun to offer student services in the second half of that year held summer programs that were considerably more intensive than their school year services. While some offered primarily remedial education, others provided enrichment programs that combined instruction in core subjects with trips, hands-on activities, cultural events and recreation. Services were offered at colleges, middle schools and community agencies and were planned for three or more weeks. Even though "slots" were limited, projects reported that most of the summer programs only attracted a limited number of students. One session that aimed for 125 students attracted 25 to 30. A program in a school with several hundred students enrolled 20 in its first summer program. Transportation was a major

problem in some projects, but even projects in which students could participate at a neighborhood school or community center did not attract as many students as planned. Notable exceptions included a 10-day residential program at a university and a one-week marine science institute operated by an existing partnership of colleges and universities. In both of these summer programs, GEAR UP students joined others attending programs that were not run by GEAR UP. Also successful in attracting students was a one-month summer camp operated in conjunction with a summer school (mandatory for some students).

In spring 2001, when the second year site visits were conducted, the plans for summer 2001 called for less remedial instruction and fewer weeks of service. All but two of the projects were planning a summer program, but most programs were to be fewer than four weeks in length, focus on academics and offer field trips and other events. Enrichment activities were to be offered, especially in science and technology. All summer programs were to be voluntary, and projects had scaled back their expectations about the numbers of students who might attend based on the prior year's experience. Most expected relatively small numbers of students—one-quarter to one-third of a grade cohort. A few projects had established eligibility criteria as well and were planning to enroll only students who had demonstrated good behavior during the school year or whose parents actively enrolled them in the session. Most projects planned to enroll students on a first-come, first-served basis, if oversubscribed. A few projects were planning parent activities in conjunction with the summer offerings for students, such as instruction in how to help students with their homework.

Intensity of Supplemental Services

Much of the GEAR UP intervention is supplemental. Therefore, how much service or contact with the project typical participants are likely to receive is an issue. The most intensive services, such as summer camps, are voluntary and used by only small number of participants. Even without considering who uses which services, we know that GEAR UP resources are limited. For those GEAR UP projects in the longitudinal study, the typical grant expends about $650 of their federal resources per student.[13] This does not include the matching funds they are required to secure.

The combination of the following factors suggests that the amount of GEAR UP contact that a "typical" student experiences is likely to be modest. These factors are:

- The overall per participant dollar figure.
- The limited types of "all participant" services such as fairs and some college visits.
- The "targeting" of tutoring, which is the most common and intensive service.
- The voluntary nature of other more intensive services such as the summer programs.

Studies of supplemental programs repeatedly have shown that program effectiveness is directly related to the amount of service students receive.[14] For this reason, the longitudinal study of GEAR UP is paying close attention to who receives each type of service (especially when participation is voluntary) as well as how much service each participant receives.

The data also suggest that considerable variety is likely in the per-student contact hours both within and across projects. The variation in intensity of services is both intentional on the part of some projects and an unintentional result of individual projects' designs in other cases. From the case studies, it appears that

the most common supplemental services offered to **all** students are relatively low-intensity ones, such as week-long career fairs or one-day college visits (although activities related to college visits may extend over longer periods). Most projects offer one career fair a year and one or two college visits for all participants. Tutoring, while far more intensive, is used by a subset of students with academic need. Project staff have indicated that the number of students participating in tutoring varies across projects from one-quarter to three-quarters.

Almost one-third of the projects provide one-on-one guidance services to students with academic need. However, guidance counselors reported that contact hours per participant are relatively small ranging from less than one hour to about four or five hours a year, with sessions lasting from 30 minutes to one hour. Additionally, the guidance hours received under GEAR UP are not duplicative of counseling services already provided by schools because counselors reported insufficient time to meet with each seventh-grade student each year. In programs in which GEAR UP offers a course (such as a science or career class), the hours per enrollee are high but the percentage of a cohort enrolled in the course is often low. Projects report that only one-quarter of a cohort or less may be enrolled in these courses (such as a MESA or AVID class).[15] The same holds true for the summer programs. The summer programs are intensive, including full-day and even residential projects that last one to four weeks, but only one-quarter of the cohort or less may enroll.

Only the projects that have a widespread effect on instruction, through reform of core curricula or extensive in-service to improve instruction, are likely to provide a service (i.e., instruction) that affects an entire cohort at a relatively intense level. As we will discuss in more detail later, one of the 20 projects in the longitudinal study is currently offering a new curriculum in a core academic subject that affects instruction for **all** students in a cohort. A few additional projects are embarked on reforms that may have an effect on curricula for all or may affect all students through policy changes in the future (e.g., by leading a district to mandate eighth-grade algebra for all students or by encouraging students to explore career choices and use instructional software programs).

The GEAR UP program was specifically designed with enough flexibility to permit a project to develop models of service that fit the needs of their school and its students within the cohort structure. The varying intensities of services and differences in the services provided an opportunity to understand how projects served a cohort of students. Most GEAR UP projects planned their offerings so that some services were not intended to be provided to all students, especially remedial services. Further, resource limitations meant that participation in many widely reported GEAR UP services was limited, voluntary or both. Students and their parents elect to participate in services such as tutoring during nonschool hours, afterschool or Saturday programs, mentoring, optional college visits, special events, and the summer programs. Many of these services could not by offered to all students even if student and parent interest was there because projects do not have the capacity to provide them (i.e., the staff resources and funds). There is only one project among the 20 that, as a matter of policy, spends resources **solely** for those supplemental services that can be provided equally to all students and purchases only materials that can be used equally by all students. A second project provides enrichment services to all students who do not receive tutoring. In short, the design of services and the resource levels mean that most GEAR UP projects cannot provide the same services and service levels to everyone. These projects typically evaluate the students to determine their individual needs and how best to serve them.

Services Parents Receive

Involving parents in GEAR UP. In addition to students, GEAR UP is charged with providing information on postsecondary education to parents as well as promoting parent involvement in education. The legislation calls for close contact with, and activities designed for, parents. Through the visits to the projects included in the longitudinal study, a preliminary picture emerged about the relationship between the GEAR UP projects and parents, as well as the status of parent services. With some notable exceptions, the projects are experiencing difficulty in engaging parents in activities.

Staff members in more than one-half of the projects in the longitudinal study indicate that attracting parents to meetings and events is quite difficult. In addition to sending out newsletters and bulletins, projects have tried the following parent initiatives without much success in attracting large numbers of parents:

- Parent and child workshops on college awareness or helping children study.
- Parent components in Saturday programs.
- Parent meetings or "nights."
- GED classes.
- Parent auxiliaries (boards, alliances, committees).

Some project staff members have become frustrated with the lack of parent responsiveness, a viewpoint echoed by teachers in the same project schools, who attributed poor attendance to parents' lack of concern with their children's education. Parents, in contrast, saw themselves as involved in, and concerned about, their children's education.

About one-third of the projects we visited, reported that they are successfully reaching parents. Two types of approaches seem to work in those projects.

- Four of the projects enroll parents in **parent institutes**. In three of these projects, the institutes are operated by a contractor under a state GEAR UP grant. The fourth is operated as part of a citywide effort to empower parents. Typically, the institutes are 9- or 10-week workshops that provide parents with information and assistance to help their children prepare for college. Those operated by the contractor rely on the contractor to recruit parents. Instruction is offered in English and Spanish, and child care is provided. Parents "graduate" if they attend a certain percentage of sessions. All four projects involved in institutes report large enrollments and plans to hold more workshops next year.

- Two projects hold **individual parent and child counseling sessions** at school for all or most of a cohort, and staff in an additional two projects make large numbers of home visits (100 or more during the school year). In one case, the individual meetings with parents and their children are "facilitated" by specially trained teachers with 90 percent of parents attending. In the other projects, the parent sessions are operated by GEAR UP staff (including specialized community liaisons). Although clearly not mandatory for parents, all of the projects make strong efforts to impress upon parents how important these sessions are for their children's future.

Both of these types of approaches require considerable effort (i.e., staff resources) to organize, recruit parents, schedule and run. The activities themselves give parents personal attention, provide inducements to come (real or perceived) or make it easy to participate. This is particularly true of the home visits. They

also require parents to commit in advance to attending, and if they fail to attend, their absence is quite visible.

Support Schools Receive

School reform. The most important distinction to emerge from the site visits about the services that GEAR UP provides is between instructional or other school reform efforts that are part of the regular curriculum and operation of the school and all other GEAR UP services. Each school selects its own approach to serving an entire cohort of students. To address the comprehensive list of objectives for GEAR UP, projects in the evaluation developed plans that included a broad array of services designed to meet the requirements of the legislation and the application guidelines. Most projects in the national evaluation provide varying amounts of direct assistance to students and have limited involvement in curriculum or instruction at the schools. In most of these projects, students receive varying amounts of services.

The school reform projects are interesting because they represent a distinct group of GEAR UP grants. Among the 20 projects visited in the first and second years of the GEAR UP program, a few are fully or partially involved in curricular or other school reform activities likely to engage all students or have a visible impact on the schools that the GEAR UP participants attend.

- **One project in the evaluation is undertaking a major curriculum reform effort.** This joint effort by the schools, district, community college and universities has resulted in new math and language arts curricula for seventh and eighth grades as well as changes to school schedules and texts. Teachers participated in drafting the reforms and received extensive paid training. Resource teachers are present in the schools to demonstrate the curriculum and work with the teachers on implementation. Respondents report that the new curricula are more rigorous, are supplemented with additional help for students who are having difficulty, and offer more challenging courses for advanced students. The project has also implemented other services more typical of GEAR UP projects as a whole such as a college and career awareness component during homeroom, weekend classes for seventh-graders who will take algebra in eighth grade, after-school mentoring clubs, college visits and a summer college residential program.

- **A few of the other projects in the evaluation have components that augment the instructional programs in the schools they serve but are not large-scale school reforms.** One project has used GEAR UP to expand a previously purchased program called NovaNET, adding resource persons in computer labs and teacher training.[16] Another project has introduced two new courses, a science course and a study skills and career awareness course based on AVID.[17] These courses, however, are appended to the school day, and relatively few students participate. In one project, the director played an important role in reform, helping to draft the school's improvement plan, but the GEAR UP services themselves remain supplemental. Two projects have provided resources for teacher training to improve instructional abilities in core subjects, and one has installed a computer-assisted instruction (CAI) lab in each school where students can practice English, math and science lessons. One project has created school teams that can decide how to spend school-level grant funds of more than $20,000 each year. Some of the funds were used to purchase instructional assistance such as career information software and for teacher training by a writing specialist. In these projects, as in the rest of the projects

visited, the greater focus of resources is on serving students directly by supplementing their education with tutoring or other services.

One hypothesis is that where GEAR UP has an impact on the quality and rigor of instruction, it is more likely to have an impact on student academic performance and, hence, preparation for college. If this is true, then being able to affect the content and delivery of instruction seems preferable to providing supplementary services both from the standpoint of intensity of intervention as well as from the standpoint of making reforms of lasting value. If identifying the individual needs of students provides the greatest benefit on academic performance, then providing supplemental services, an underlying premise of GEAR UP, is warranted. The national evaluation will provide an opportunity to look at these hypotheses, but there are some limits to what the study can measure. As noted above, there are few projects in the group focusing on school reform efforts. Furthermore, although several projects may be moving toward greater involvement in instruction in the participating middle schools, the cohort in the longitudinal component of the national evaluation will be leaving middle school by the end of the 2001-02 school year. Thus, these students may not experience the full impact of those reforms. Nonetheless, the study can examine the early impact of those GEAR UP projects that seek to influence middle school instruction on short-term student outcomes (such as performance in algebra or other core courses) compared with projects that focus on other services.

Professional Development Opportunities. Most GEAR UP-supported professional development activities appeared to be relatively limited and short term for the 20 projects we visited. Aside from the one project that has introduced major curriculum development and a few others that have introduced new courses or instructional and career software, most teacher in-service education is not linked to specific GEAR UP curricula or other school reforms. Instead, projects have held one or more workshops each on a wide range of topics such as using math manipulatives, teaching writing, managing classrooms or raising teacher expectations about student performance. Projects may also encourage teachers to become more professionally engaged by supporting teacher-selected in-service training workshops, classes at colleges or attendance at professional meetings. One project provides partial subsidies for classes at a partner university. Some projects purchase software for career information or tutoring and provide teachers with the training to guide or manage their use. Although it is difficult to generalize, projects with strong involvement of college or university education departments appear more able to offer teacher in-service training directly (employing professors). Other projects employ specialists or subsidize teachers to pursue their own professional development activities. Two projects had not undertaken any professional development activities as of the spring 2001 site visits, but both had extensive plans for the 2001-02 school year.

Among the 20 projects, the amount of professional development supported by GEAR UP rose dramatically from the first to the second year of the program. In the first year, many project staffs reported that teachers in participating schools were skeptical of GEAR UP and viewed it as competing with classroom instruction for the students' time. As a result, many projects did not implement professional development because staffs feared that teachers would view the efforts as criticism of their practices. Much of that concern with teacher support appears to have abated by the end of the second year, and projects now seem to be working with teachers to select in-service training, decide on project instructional purchases (e.g., computers, classroom materials, textbooks, videos and software—career, tutoring or instructional), and provide the training to use them. In addition, a few projects have introduced mini-grant programs in which teachers can propose individual or team instructional improvements or student activities, and GEAR UP provides the resources to implement them. In focus groups, teachers report satisfaction with the professional development opportunities that GEAR UP provides. They also

indicate that GEAR UP staff members have been receptive to their recommendations for classroom assistance, in-service education, special events and instructional purchases.

What remains to be seen is whether the mix of professional development activities implemented by GEAR UP will have an impact on the students in the longitudinal study of the program. First, there is a certain ad hoc quality to the selection of in-service offerings and considerable diversity across projects. Furthermore, in many projects, GEAR UP professional development is voluntary on the part of teachers, is supplemental to other in-service offerings and is probably not meaningful to examine apart from the full range of available teacher education and training. In addition, as we have already noted, the cohorts in the study may experience little of the impact of professional development now underway as they will be leaving middle school at the end of the 2001-02 school year..Probably the most important issue the longitudinal study can examine is the relative impact of GEAR UP's support for teacher training to implement major reforms in a few projects (core curriculum reform and introduction to NovaNET, AVID or MESA courses).

Administering GEAR UP Partnerships

GEAR UP is designed to be a community-wide educational effort. GEAR UP seeks to draw on the interests and expertise of a wide range of institutional actors with different perspectives on the schools and their needs. As a demonstration effort with required matching funds, GEAR UP has also been designed with a view toward the future, recognizing that after five years, the federal funds will end and will need to be replaced with other resources. For both of these reasons, the partnership grants are designed to engage school districts, colleges and universities, businesses, community and religious organizations and others. Also implicit in GEAR UP is the assumption that a partnership is preferable to unilateral action by schools and that there is an intrinsic benefit in cooperation among agencies with different competencies, approaches and views of accountability to achieve academic goals.

The Partnership. GEAR UP requires the involvement of organizations, businesses or entities other than school districts and colleges or universities; however, educational partners dominate most GEAR UP projects in the longitudinal study. Although some projects began with ambitious plans to engage noneducation partners in services, by the second year of the program only a few projects had identified important roles for community agencies, religious organizations, businesses or other types of noneducation partners. In a few projects, noneducation partners that had no clear role or could not provide resources had been dropped and new partners added. New partners are likely to be associated with education. New partners include additional colleges and organizations linked to particular educational programs or services the project uses (such as an occupational skills training or a software program). In addition, a few projects also engage social welfare agencies already actively involved in participating schools (such as Communities in Schools, Inc.).

Decision-makers. Many projects began with plans for elaborate formal decision making among all partners. They anticipated frequent partner meetings, sometimes augmented by subcommittees that would meet and make recommendations to the partnerships. By the second year, the number of formal all-partner meetings appears to have diminished to only a few per year in most of the projects.

Subcommittees are rarely formal entities. Key partners, including colleges and school districts, are relying more heavily on GEAR UP staff (project directors or site coordinators) to decide on, and carry out, project operations. As projects have developed and grown, more of those staff positions have been shifted from central locations to individual participating schools. This change in location has led to more

interaction with school staffs, enabling principals and teachers to play a greater role in deciding on, and providing, services. Principals are also playing an important role in selecting GEAR UP school-site staff. As already noted, more of the tutoring services are being delivered by teachers rather than college students or other volunteers. In addition, school-level administrators and teachers are working directly with GEAR UP school-level staff to decide what services to provide and which students will receive them. Principals or other school personnel are also participating in project steering committees along with district officials. All of these changes mean that schools are playing an increasingly important role in project design and operations. For some projects this change also means that district officials are becoming less involved in project operations.

As for other sources of influence on project design and operations, most of the projects point to the central importance of the original federal grants application in deciding how to organize their projects and in determining what services to offer. The persons who drafted the application tended to be college, university or school district officials or grant writers who relied heavily upon the announcement to design project governance and services. Not only do the goals of the projects reiterate the announcement, but the initial plans to engage many noneducation partners and offer a wide array of services (rather than engaging a few partners and limiting the services) also are probably largely attributable to the announcement. What projects have found, however, is that some parts of the original announcement have proven difficult to implement. In particular, the concept of a broad-based decision-making partnership, the emphasis on mentoring, the requirement for parental involvement and reaching all the students in a cohort have all proven problematic.

Apportioning GEAR UP Resources. The vast majority of GEAR UP resources are used to provide staffing for the projects. Most of the projects in the longitudinal study report that they spend three-quarters or more of their federal resources on salaries and benefits of project staff and contractors who manage and provide services. Reflecting the average $713,000 size of GEAR UP partnership grants, most GEAR UP projects have relatively small professional staffs that are engaged in design and administrative tasks as well as direct provision of services. Typically, GEAR UP staffs in the second year of the grant include:

- A full-time project director or other day-to-day administrator who rarely provides direct services to students.
- Possibly a second full-time administrative or curriculum professional who combines administrative and service responsibilities.
- A full-time site coordinator or resource teacher at each participating middle school (who administers and usually provides some mix of classes, tutoring, counseling, workshops, lab supervision and parent services).
- Possibly other part-time school-level staff (e.g., teachers who tutor after school or who participate in the summer program and college-student volunteers or paid assistants).

Several projects engage consultants, almost all of whom are part-time contractors, to develop curricula, provide teacher in-service training, conduct evaluations or provide other services. In addition, principals and teachers provide "match" staffing contributions to the projects. There are unusual staffing arrangements at some projects, however. For example, in one single-school project, the principal is also the project director; there is a GEAR UP counselor-consultant; and six teachers are paid for eight hours a

week each to provide an additional period of GEAR UP initiated instruction each day. As already noted, over time many projects have moved greater shares of staff to the school level than originally anticipated.

A few projects are far more heavily staffed. For example, a one-school project reports a full-time project director, a full-time site coordinator (co-director), a full-time coordinator of Saturday activities, three full-time case managers providing guidance services to at-risk students, and six part-time staff for the Saturday program. In another project, two participating middle schools have 11 professional GEAR UP staff, including two substitute teachers so that regular teachers can be freed up for curriculum planning and in-service training. In addition to a full-time project director, one project has three full-time professional positions at each of three participating middle schools. The evaluation will be in a position to assess if larger numbers of professional staff per school have a substantial effect on the intensity of student involvement with GEAR UP and hence student outcomes.

GEAR UP and the School Environment

Any new program faces implementation challenges, and GEAR UP has been no exception. In the first year of GEAR UP site visits, it was apparent that some of the schools in the longitudinal study had serious educational problems. They were characterized by poor academic performance, high staff turnover and low teacher morale. Some were in danger of state takeover or other corrective action because of poor student performance over many years. Some had been selected for GEAR UP specifically because the project held the promise of additional resources for school improvement, but the risks of placing new projects in such troubled environments were great. Initially, GEAR UP staff in many projects told us that there was considerable teacher resistance to GEAR UP. In particular, teachers saw GEAR UP as having the potential to take time away from academics just when schools were under pressure to raise student performance on standardized tests. GEAR UP staff members were concerned that the projects would have great difficulty gaining acceptance in the schools, some of which had not volunteered for GEAR UP participation.

From the second year visits, site visitors report that the status of GEAR UP in the schools appears to have improved markedly. In a few cases, GEAR UP staff members are directly involved in efforts at school improvement, helping to draft plans for schools in danger of state takeover or supporting major reforms (such as NovaNET or new curricula). More commonly, GEAR UP resources provide substantial amounts of tutoring to students in preparation for state assessment tests. Several schools have new principals who are more inclined to pursue reforms than their predecessors and view GEAR UP as an opportunity to upgrade educational offerings and professional development opportunities. In a few projects, GEAR UP is part of a district or citywide effort at educational improvement, parent empowerment or other reform. If those we spoke with are indicative of teachers as a whole, concerns about the program, especially the concern that it will take time away from academics, have greatly declined. Some teachers felt that GEAR UP is creating a more positive climate in the school.

Part Two: State GEAR UP Projects

About one-third of the GEAR UP resources are spread across 30 state projects with the average award being about $2.4 million for 2001-02. During the second year of GEAR UP (2000-01), there were 28 GEAR UP state grantees serving more than 165,000 students, with nearly one-half (47 percent) of the students being in seventh or eighth grades. According to the Annual Performance Reports submitted by these grantees, students were evenly divided by gender and were predominately members of minority groups. Whites were the largest group served (40 percent), followed by African American students (22 percent) and Hispanic students (20 percent). Approximately 7 percent of the students were Asian. American Indians and Alaska Natives were about 7 percent, and 4 percent were Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Twenty-one percent of the students were identified as LEP.[18] This is higher than nationally reported numbers, which indicated that in 1999-2000 roughly 9 percent of all public school students were LEP.[19]

As noted earlier, the state projects have fewer design constraints than partnerships and greater latitude with respect to determining participants and deciding what to offer. Because the designs of the state projects are all quite different, and, hence, "typical" student assistance varies a great deal, the national evaluation of GEAR UP is not including these projects and their student participants in the longitudinal study. Nonetheless, the national evaluation staff has twice visited a random sample of seven state projects drawn from the 21 states that were awarded grants in the first grant cycle. Based on these seven states, we have identified two distinct approaches to GEAR UP project administration—projects administered directly by state agencies and projects administered primarily through subgrants designed much like partnership grants. This section of the report briefly describes the key features of both types of state project. It then provides some general observations about the common features of the seven state grants.

Grants Where All or Most Services Are Administered by State Agencies

Four of the seven grantees visited administer the GEAR UP services directly from the state agency where the grant is housed. In one state, the governor's office is the lead agency, in partnership with the state commission on higher education and other nongovernmental organizations. The project serves one high-poverty, low-performance middle school in each of nine school districts or about 2,000 students in the first year. There are 11 full-time equivalent GEAR UP counselors at the nine schools, providing tutoring, career awareness and some instruction during school hours using state-designated curricula. Scholarship funds have been placed in a trust for use in later years. In another state, the GEAR UP project is administered by the state agency that provides college financial assistance through 16 regional entities that recruit and enroll seventh- and eighth-grade students throughout the state in the 21st-Century Scholars Program. The program guarantees that any low-income eighth-grade student, who graduates from high school with a 2.0 GPA, does not use drugs or alcohol or commit a crime, enrolls in a state institution and applies on time for financial aid will receive free college tuition. The state is using GEAR UP scholarship funds to expand summer school scholarships before the freshman year and the summer after the first year of college and to introduce mentor scholarships that enable college juniors and seniors to mentor freshmen and sophomores.

Grants Where All or Most Services Are Conducted through Subgrants to Schools or Districts

The remaining three projects from the sample have awarded grants (i.e., subgrants of federal funds) to schools or districts within the state to operate GEAR UP projects. For example, in one state, the regents

for higher education award small six-month planning grants and 12-month implementation grants of $15,000 each to 30 high-poverty school districts each year to meet locally identified needs—for tutoring, mentoring, homework hotlines, reading programs, entrance exam preparation, summer school or professional development. Not all funds are awarded to districts, however. The project has also provided workshops on interpreting state assessment test results, supported summer math academies at colleges and developed instructional videos, parent guides and television and radio commercials. GEAR UP scholarship funds are augmenting the state scholarships by filling the "unmet need" gap and will be spent as students now in GEAR UP enter college. In another state, the state education agency (SEA) has made subgrants to partnerships of one to three middle schools, a high school and a college. These subgrants provide GEAR UP services in 21 middle schools with high rates of NSLP eligibility and low student mobility. State officials chose schools with low mobility rates because they believed it would be impossible for GEAR UP to have effects in schools with high student turnover rates. School-level activities are not fully implemented yet but have included career days, college visits, special events, Saturday programs and limited professional development. In addition, the SEA has undertaken statewide activities that include technical assistance to participating schools, a statewide student conference and parent workshops. Last year the state obtained a scholarship waiver. It plans to award the first scholarships in fall 2001 for in-state tuition and room and board after other state scholarship sources are exhausted.[20]

Common Features. Most of the seven state grants visited:

- Provide (or will provide) student services similar to those provided by the partnerships.
- Use a "cohort" approach (only one focuses primarily on low income students within participating schools).
- Try to engage parents in their children's education.
- Provide some professional development opportunities for teachers.

Given the greater design flexibility in state grants, it appears that most state grantees have, nonetheless, chosen a course of action much like the partnership grantees. With one or two exceptions, however, it has taken these seven states longer to decide on and implement services than it has taken the partnerships. The projects with subgranting arrangements were not all fully operational in spring 2001. Further, the per student resources are lower in the state projects than in the partnerships.

Finally, most of the scholarship funds awarded to states are not being spent at this time. Although the majority of the seven projects are administered by higher education agencies, almost all of the seven states have obtained waivers allowing them to spend all or a large share of their scholarship funds when students who are now in ninth grade (2001-02 school year) or lower reach college age—four or five years from now.

Due to the variation in approaches taken by the state grantees, the decision was made to visit a new set of seven states during spring 2002.

Endnotes

[1] See, for example, C. Howley, M. Strange, and R. Bickel. (2000). *Research about school size and school performance in improvished communities.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education.
T.R. Guskey. (1997). *The relationship between socioeconomic characteristics and school-level performance assessment results.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Chicago, Ill., March 1997).
C. R. Howley and R. Bickel. (2000). *When it comes to schooling . . . small works: school size, poverty, and student achievement.* Randolph, Vt.: Rural School and Community Trust.

[2] Sufficient information to calculate per student funding amounts for the 1999 and new 2000 grantees was reported by 218 grantees (92 percent) in their 2001 Annual Performance Reports (APRs).

[3] Priority students are defined as students in preschool through twelfth grade who are eligible to be counted under Section 1124(c) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I), for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act or for assistance under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), authorized by Title I of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1966.

[4] A random sample of these projects was selected stratifying by approach, by fiscal agent and by whether or not the project was located in a state with a state GEAR UP grant. Only projects planning to serve a new seventh-grade cohort in fall 2000 were included in the final selection so that baseline measures of student attitudes and aspirations could be obtained. Consequently, the sample is not statistically representative of all GEAR UP grantees.

[5] Of the 20 sites visited, three projects are not participating in the longitudinal study. Reasons for withdrawing include delays in obtaining district approval to conduct research and difficulty obtaining parental permission to survey students as well as access student records.

[6] The grant funding cycle for FY 2001 was Sept. 1, 2000, through Aug. 31, 2001. Grantees were required to submit their APRs for FY 2001 by May 1, 2001.

[7] National Center for Education Statistics. (June 2000). *Statistics in brief. Overview of public elementary and secondary schools and districts: School year 1998-99.* Washington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

[8] Percent of students identified as limited English proficient reported by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs.

[9] Only 14 projects participating in the longitudinal study submitted complete student background and participation data in time to be included in this report. The projects that withdrew from the longitudinal study were visited in 2001 and are included in the site visit information in this report.

[10] U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "Public elementary-secondary school universe survey," 1999-2000, and "Local education agency universe survey," 1999-2000.

[11] By comparison, children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals (breakfasts, lunches and snacks) under the National School Lunch Program. Those with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals. For the period July 1, 2000, through June 30, 2001, 130 percent of the poverty level was $22,165 for a family of four; 185 percent was $31,543 (*Federal Register*, Vol. 65, No. 65).

[12] See, for example, M. Invernizzi and M. Ouellette. (2001). *Improving children's reading ability through volunteer reading tutoring programs. Issue Brief.* Washington, D.C.: Center for Best Practices, National Governors Association.

[13] The $650 is for all services, not just student services. It covers services for parents and teachers as well as curriculum reform efforts plus overall project operations.

[14] See, for example, B.A. Wasik. (1997). *Volunteer tutoring programs. A review of research on acheivement outcomes. Report No. 14.* Baltimore, Md.: Center for Research on Education of Students Placed At Risk. Funded by: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education. See also R. H. Fenske, C. A. Geranios, J. E. Keller, and D. E. Moore. (1997). *Early intervention programs. Opening the door to higher education.* Washington, D.C.: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education. (ED 412 863).

[15] MESA stands for the Math, Engineering and Science Achievement. This is a "hands-on" program that has been developed by several university engineering departments. AVID stands for Advancement Via Individual Determination. This program is designed to help underachieving students with high academic potential prepare for entrance into a four-year college.

[16] NovaNET is a software program that links educators with technology and teaching methods. It helps students study for courses and standardized tests. Students are also provided laptops under this program.

[17] In AVID, college and middle or high school partners jointly develop the curriculum for an academic class. This class is designed to provide low-income students and first-generation college students with academic assistance. AVID provides information about college preparatory courses and financial aid, tutoring and other encouragement to enroll in college preparatory courses and apply for college. The structure for AVID includes a regularly scheduled academic elective, a rigorous curriculum, structured tutorials, parent training and a site team composed of the AVID coordinator, the principal, core academic teachers and students.

[18] Information on the number of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students was reported by 16 of the 28 states.

[19] Reported by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs.

[20] Projects that are serving priority students and those that were grantees under the National Early Intervention Scholarship and Partnership (NEISP) program served 12th-grade students during 2000-01. Those students who enrolled in college were eligible for GEAR UP scholarships in fall 2001.

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